

C. Remarks

This communication is submitted under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 in response to the Final Office Action mailed September 17, 2003. Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments made herein "cancel claims or comply [] with any requirement of form" because Applicant has re-written the objected-to claims in independent form. Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and reexamination of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, and respectfully submits that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Applicant respectfully acknowledges the interview summary mailed by the Office on November 3, 2003 in response to the telephone interview conducted on October 28, 2003 to discuss the merits of claims 1, 17, and 35. Applicant further acknowledges that no agreement was reached with respect to patentability of claims 1, 17, and 35. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully traverses the outstanding rejection with respect to these claims and reserves the right to make additional arguments as may be necessary to distinguish these claims from the cited references.

On page 2, paragraph 4 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9-12, 14-18, 23, 24, 26-29, 31-36, 38, 40, 41, 43-46, and 48 are finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by newly cited reference to Ortiz (US PG Pub. No. 002/0077974A1).

On page 4, paragraph 7 of the Office Action claims 5, 8, 13, 22, 25, 30, 39, 42, and 47 are finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the newly cited reference to Ortiz.

Applicant respectfully traverses each of the above rejections under §§ 102(e) and 103(a).

On page 6, paragraph 8 of the Office Action claims 3, 19, 20, 21, and 37 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would otherwise be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant has amended claims 1, 17, and 35 to include all of the features of the base claim and the respective objected-to dependent claims. Therefore, as amended, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 17, and 35 are now in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 4-16, 20-34, and 38-48 also are in condition for allowance at least because of their dependency from claims 1, 17, and 35, respectively.

Claims 20, 21, 39, and 43-48 have been amended to correct several minor typographical errors. The amendments do not add new matter. Thus, these claims also are in condition for allowance.

Applicant has added new claims 49 and 50 in the application. New claim 49 includes all of the features of original claim 17 and the features of original claim 21, which was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 49 is in condition for allowance. Claim 50 depends from claim 49 and is therefore also in condition for allowance at least because of its dependency from claim 49.

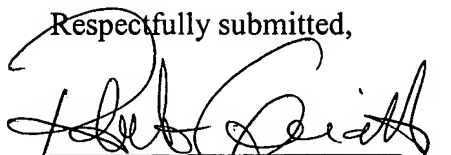
Applicant does not otherwise concede, however, the correctness of the Office's rejection with respect to any of the dependent claims discussed above. Applicant also reserves the right to make additional arguments as may be necessary to further distinguish the features of the dependent claims from any of the cited references, taken alone or in combination. A detailed discussion of these differences is believed to be unnecessary at this time in view of the basic differences in the independent claims discussed above.

As all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed, Applicant respectfully requests the issuance of a Notice of Allowance with respect to the pending claims.

If the Office believes that the present application is in condition for disposition other than allowance, Applicant respectfully requests that the Office contact the

undersigned at the telephone number listed below so that such concerns may be expeditiously addressed.

Respectfully submitted,



Roberto Capriotti
Reg. No. 46,599

KIRKPATRICK & LOCKHART, LLP
Henry W. Oliver Building
535 Smithfield Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222

Tel. (412) 355-8956
Fax (412) 355-6501